

TO: Members of the Advisory Committee on Early Education and Care

FR: Representative Patricia Haddad and Senator Robert Antonioni, Co-chairs of the Advisory Committee

DT: Wednesday, December 01, 2004

RE: Subgroup Recommendations on Workforce Development, School Readiness Assessment, Program Quality, and Program Service Delivery.

Attached are copies of the recommendations of the subgroups assembled by the Advisory Committee to address the following issues:

- [Workforce Development](#)
- [School Readiness Assessment](#)
- [Program Quality](#)
- [Program Service Delivery](#)

These subgroup recommendations, which will inform our Advisory Committee discussions, were submitted at yesterday's meeting. These draft recommendations are now available online: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/reports/repindex.htm>.

As co-chairs, we will accept written comments in reaction to the subgroup reports from Advisory Committee members **until Monday, December 6, 2004, at 1 P.M.** We ask that Advisory Committee members email written comments to us at Patricia.Haddad@MassMail.state.ma.us and Robert.Antonioni@MassMail.state.ma.us. Your comments will be added to the draft recommendations on the website prior to the final public hearing.

Members of the public are invited to submit written testimony as well as to give oral testimony at the public hearing scheduled for Thursday, December 9, 2004 at 1 P.M. (location to be announced). Prior to the hearing, written testimony may be dropped off to Sen. Antonioni's office in Room 109 E of the State House.

You are reminded that an Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 13, 2004 from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. in Senate Reading Room (located in the Senate Lobby). At that time, we will discuss the final report.

Once again, thank you for all the time and energy you have dedicated to this process. Your contributions are most appreciated.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

November 30, 2004

Co-Chairs:

Anne O'Driscoll

Mary Ann Anthony

Members:

Senator Joan Menard and Bridget Morrissey

Representative Marie St. Fleur and Michele Lisio

Representative Alice Wolf and Sondra Peskoe

Vicki Bartolini

Peter Cross

Anne Nunes

Charge of the Subcommittee

What is needed to support the education, training, and compensation of the early education and care workforce?

1. Review current and recent research and reports
2. Consider continuity of education and care for children birth through school-age
3. Consider workforce turnover issues

Subcommittee Recommendations

We recognize that the caliber and stability of the early education and care workforce is critical to the future success of the children of the Commonwealth, therefore it is necessary to develop and implement high professional standards and to support the education, training and compensation of those who provide these services.

I. Elements of a Professional Development System

Recommendation WF1

Develop a comprehensive professional development system that supports the early education and care field (birth through school-age). The system's elements should provide the existing workforce opportunities to transition to higher standards, should improve retention rates, and should attract new recruits to the field of early education and care. At a minimum, the system should reflect leading industry approaches to the following elements:

- Core competencies
- Collaboration in and with higher education
- Credit for prior learning
- Compensation/recruitment/retention
- Access to professional development opportunities
- Professional development registry
- Career ladder or lattice

Recommendation WF2

Identify system-wide core competencies—the knowledge and skills needed to provide quality education and care to children (birth through school-age)—that reflect current research and best practices and can be aligned with national, industry and higher-education standards.

Recommendation WF3

Facilitate collaboration between higher education institutions and the early education and care workforce to determine professional development needs, to assess institutional capacity to meet needs, to overcome existing barriers in the higher education system and to assist in the development of a professional development registry (see below). Study further the feasibility of designing and enhancing programs such as The Massachusetts Apprenticeship Program, Advancing the Field, and Building Careers.

Recommendation WF4

Develop a state-wide system for granting credit for prior learning that is built upon the core competencies and allows students to translate their knowledge and skills into college-level coursework.

Recommendation WF5

Design a plan for increased and equitable compensation that reflects uniform higher professional standards, as well as improves recruitment and retention. (Consider new and existing resources such as scholarships, grants, tuition remission, loans and loan forgiveness programs which include service commitment components, and examine models such as the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) program, the WAGE\$ program, and other unique incentive programs).

Recommendation WF6

Facilitate access to higher education and on-going professional development opportunities for all sectors of the early education and care workforce. In particular, accommodate for:

- the limited financial resources of the workforce;
- the need for career counseling;
- the need for general academic and literacy support;
- language barriers found in a diverse workforce;
- the unique needs of adult learners; and
- scheduling and location difficulties.

Recommendation WF7

Design a registry (database) that (1) documents the professional development (degrees awarded, courses taken, etc.) of the workforce and allows for accurate and timely assessment of the professional development needs of the workforce and (2) allows easy access to information on state-approved early education and care trainers and training programs.

Recommendation WF8

Establish a comprehensive career ladder or lattice that allows for multiple points of entry, opportunities to move within the field and across settings, programs, and age groups (birth through school-age).

II. Licensing/Credentials/Certification

Recommendation WF9:

Study further what license/credentials/certification will be required of teachers in early education and care programs, and what, if any, alternative paths will allow those from other professions or other countries to meet these requirements.

Recommendation WF10:

Study further which state department should have oversight of licensing/credentialing/certification and be charged with streamlining the process.

NOTES

WF1 - Recent research and studies have clearly documented that the educational level and type of training of early education and care providers have a strong impact on the quality of services for children.

WF2 - Core competencies are a specific set of knowledge and observable skills that adults working with children should know and be able to do in order to provide high quality services to children and their families. The core competencies must be integrated into all professional development opportunities and be based upon agreed upon standards. The core competencies should be reflective of the skills and knowledge needed to work with children and families birth through school age.

WF3 - Massachusetts has successfully implemented a number of programs that promote collaboration between institutions of higher education, communities, and state agencies to support professional development of the early education and care workforce. Programs such as the Massachusetts Apprenticeship Project, Advancing the Field, and Building Careers have successfully addressed the challenges in meeting the needs of adult learners. These programs have utilized career counseling, mentoring, alternative means of service delivery, and other strategies to accommodate the early education and care workforce.

WF4 - Credit should be provided when providers can document attainment of the core competencies through college courses, achieved certificates such as Child

Development Associate (CDA), life experience, and/or performance and standardized assessments.

WF5 - Compensation, Recruitment, and Retention are overarching issues within the workforce that must be addressed. Research indicates that compensation is linked closely to provision of quality services. Models of compensation such as the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) should be investigated. Research indicates that early education and care providers stay in the field longer when equitable compensation and benefits are provided. Career counseling is an important aspect of recruitment and retention. Professionals who work with the providers must have an understanding of the multiple career paths, opportunities, and available services.

WF6 - Access to professional development opportunities must be facilitated. Access can be facilitated through a number of avenues so that the early education and care workforce can participate in professional development opportunities.

- Financial support must be available to allow the early education and workforce access to higher education opportunities. Consideration should be given to loan forgiveness programs, tuition remission, financial aid, commitment to service, and other approaches.
- Academic support is needed that addresses the unique needs of this workforce. Many early education and care providers have not participated in formal education in many years. They may need a great deal of support to be able to use technology successfully. Additionally, tutoring, writing, and specific academic supports may be needed to ensure that these participants can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.
- The diversity of the early education and care workforce is commendable and should be supported. Many participants in the workforce speak languages other than English. Supports need to be developed that allow English Language Learners access to and success in English speaking courses. Institutions of higher education as well as other training agencies should study and develop strategies, materials, and supports for accommodating the varied language needs of the workforce.
- Adult learners are the majority of the early education and care workforce. When (and if) new standards are imposed that require additional and focused professional development, accommodations must be made. Flexibility regarding scheduling of classes is important. Institutions of higher education will need to continue to be creative in delivering courses during

evenings, week-ends, at places of employment, in cohort models, etc. Additionally, consideration must be given for modes of delivery of courses such as distance learning, on-line components, and traditional face-to-face classes.

- Field experiences and practica must be able to be accomplished or partially accomplished in people's place of employment. The early education and care workforce cannot financially afford to take a leave from their job to fulfill every current practica requirement. Opportunities to document evidence of attainment of core competencies will be crucial in this area.
- The use and integration of lab schools and/or campus child care programs should be considered in determining required field experiences. The lab schools serve an important role in preservice coursework and may or may not be appropriate as practica placements for early education and care providers who are employed in other settings.

WF7 – Various states have developed professional development registries.

WF8 – NA

WF9 – NA

WF10 – Currently, early education and care providers have avenues tied directly to the existing agencies of the Office for Child Care Services, the Department of Public Health, and the Department of Education. Regulations, competencies, and licensing requirements are specific to the credential offered by that agency. Investigation should be done to see if and how a common credential for all early education and care providers that allows for specific training in specialty areas (such as public school, Early Intervention, and School Age programs) could be developed.

SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENT

November 30, 2004

Co-Chairs:

Maureen Ferris

Amy Kershaw

Members

Senator Bruce Tarr

Representative Stephen LeDuc

Ada Rosmarin, Mass. Assoc. of Community Partnerships for Children

Mass Federation of Teachers

Linda Stice, Quincy School Committee

Charge of the Subcommittee:

What does a school readiness assessment system look like?

1. Review current and recent research and reports
2. Consider transitions from early intervention programs and services to preschool programs and services.
3. Consider transitions from preschool programs to public school kindergarten programs and services.
4. Make recommendations including areas for further investigation.

Subcommittee Recommendations

The School Readiness Assessment Subcommittee approached its work by considering first the principles of a School Readiness Assessment System with the primary focus of helping children learn in early education and care programs, and with a secondary focus of providing some level of child-focused system-wide accountability for state early childhood programs. In developing its recommendations, the Subcommittee delineated the principles of an effective school readiness assessment system, the components of that system (child assessment, screening), the use of these components as part of an overall system that supports children's transition between infant-toddler, preschool, and Kindergarten programs, and the implementation of such a system by the Department of Early Education and Care.

I. Principles of a School Readiness Assessment System

Recommendation SRA1

The School Readiness Assessment System shall:

- be among the primary functions of the Department of Early Education and Care, and shall be a freestanding, high level, and visible function within the agency
- work toward accountability and quality improvement over time
- include multiple components that are coordinated, but meet different needs, including a program assessment piece consistent with the recommendations of the Program Quality subcommittee
- be designed to benefit children
- consider progress in all developmental domains

- apply to entire Early Education and Care system (all ages and settings)
- include resources for training and technical assistance
- be aligned with state-established learning standards, curriculum guidelines, and developmental benchmarks
- use tools for assessment and screening that are reliable, valid, and culturally and linguistically appropriate

Recommendation SRA2

Acceptable purposes of a School Readiness Assessment System include

1. Instructional (adjustments to curriculum to meet learning guidelines)
2. communication with parents and Kindergarten programs
3. identify children who need additional services
4. evaluate how program is meeting goals (Accountability)

II. Child Assessment

Recommendation SRA3

Principles of an Effective Child Assessment System include

- Draws information from multiple sources
- Conducted in the child's natural setting, based on observation by teachers or others familiar with the children
- Conducted by highly trained assessors, very familiar with the instrument(s) used
- Uses a limited variety of tools, which collect consistent information and are approved by the Department of Early Education and Care

Recommendation SRA4

While it will take a great amount of resources, ideally all programs working with preschool age children would ultimately do child assessment, and programs would be supported in that effort with the necessary workforce development and other resources.

Recommendation SRA5

Teachers can best assess children in their natural setting, which in the case of an early childhood program is the child's classroom or family child care home.

Recommendation SRA6

The state shall use purchasing power with identified vendors to maximize resources and ensure alignment with learning guidelines

Recommendation SRA7

The Department of Early Education and Care shall provide start-up and ongoing materials, training, and technical assistance, and assume the costs of these requirements; the Department's budget shall provide for a well-resourced school-readiness assessment system

Recommendation SRA8

The results of child assessments shall not be used for “high stakes” decisions regarding individual children or programs

Recommendation SRA9

Because a child’s age is an important variable in considering school-readiness, the Board of Education shall standardize kindergarten entry-age across the Commonwealth to September 1, with a phase in plan for those districts not currently using that date.

III. Child Screening**Recommendation SRA10**

Screening in all developmental domains shall take place at entry to preschool programs (consistent with Head Start requirements to screen within 45 calendar days of entry) and regularly thereafter.

Recommendation SRA11

The Board shall review and approve several developmental screening tools that are widely accepted and research-based for use within programs. Although there can be several tools, they shall capture roughly the same information. The Board and Department shall provide technical assistance to support communities trying to develop a single screening tool.

Recommendation SRA12

In implementing the screening, early education and care programs may collaborate with their Lead Educational Agency or others to create a community-wide screening process.

IV. Transition of Children Between Infant and Toddler Programs, Preschool, and Kindergarten**Recommendation SRA13****Guiding Principles for Transitions**

- Foster relationships as resources
- Promote continuity (eg: align curriculum, standards, guidelines and assessments)
- Focus on family strengths and support and interactions with schools
- Tailor practice to individual needs
- Form collaborative relationships across programs

Recommendation SRA14

Transitions must be based on a strength-based model where folders are not simply transferred from one teacher to another. The family must be involved and actual verbal contact between the early childhood program and kindergarten teacher shall be required.

Recommendation SRA15

The Board and Department shall develop a parent consent form for assessment information, which will be used at the time of enrollment in an early education and care program. The form will give permission for a early education and care programs to share information with the

child's new school at time of kindergarten entry. While parents will still retain control over whether assessment information gets shared it should be built into the process. If a parent consents to having the information shared, it will be automatically forwarded by the early childhood program. The last progress report of the year – before a child enters kindergarten -- will include a reminder of the consent and will be a time for a transition plan to be jointly developed by the parent and the provider.

Recommendation SRA16

Early childhood programs shall include transitions as part of their curriculum for children.

Recommendation SRA17

The Board and Department of Early Education and Care and the Board and Department of Education shall jointly develop a policy plan on successful transitions to kindergarten from home or early childhood programs. The plan shall include any policy or regulatory changes necessary to ensure smooth transitions. The policy plan will be based on best practices and research on early childhood assessment and successful transitions and shall:

- Take advantage of key opportunities throughout the year prior to kindergarten entry to integrate transitions into kindergarten;
- Include adequate exposure – for children and families -- to the kindergarten environment before entry and involve of families early and regularly in transition planning;
- Require every preschool program and every school (public or private) to ensure smooth transitions to kindergarten;
- Identify or specify the role of communities and local councils in developing a transition plan for all children in a community.
- Be based on the recognition that transitions are sensitive times for parents and children.

V. Implementation

Recommendation SRA18

In the development of the workforce development system, the Board and Department shall recognize and incorporate the need for early educators to be well-trained and comfortable with any school readiness assessment system. Course work, professional development trainings, core competencies and potentially minimum teacher qualifications and certification should all incorporate the need for familiarity with early childhood observation and assessment.

Recommendation SRA19

As the Department of Early Education and Care is created, the Board shall ensure that the principles and recommendations outlined above are incorporated into the licensing, regulations, and operating policies of the Department to guide its work.

Recommendation SRA20

The Board of Early Education and Care shall build on and consider the work and findings of the School Readiness Indicator Project (SRIP) working subcommittee on early childhood

assessments, and the recommendations of this subcommittee shall be submitted to the SRIP working subcommittee on early childhood assessments to inform its work.

Recommendation SRA21

The timeline for implementing these School Readiness Assessment Recommendations shall follow the following recommended order, and shall be completed not later than calendar year 2008.

1. Development of approved developmental benchmarks, learning standards and curriculum guidelines for all age groups, beginning with ages three and four
2. look at what programs are currently using, and if appropriate use and build on findings of School Readiness Indicator Project
3. evaluation and piloting of assessment tools
4. selection of assessment tools
5. customization of tools (working with vendors where appropriate)
6. pilot tools in different demographic populations
7. full roll-out of tools first to programs serving three and four-year-olds, then to all age groups
8. initial and ongoing evaluation of School Readiness Assessment System

Recommendation SRA22

The implementation of this Committee's recommendations regarding a system of child screening shall take place simultaneously to the implementation timeline outlined in Recommendation SRA21, and should take place in the following order:

1. Identifying acceptable screening tools
2. training workforce and programs on screening tools
3. changing regulations to include regular screening, and screening at entry to programs
4. establish and approved referral process for children who have needs identified through screening
5. implement new screening requirements at re-licensing visit for individual programs

VI. Areas for further study

Recommendation SRA23

The Department of Early Education and Care and its Board shall study and make recommendations related to the use of aggregated data collected through individual child assessments and child screenings. These recommendations should include direction as to the type of data that can or shall be aggregated, and whether it can or shall be aggregated at the program, community, or statewide level.

NOTES

SRA2 – More specifically, the Subcommittee defined these **purposes** in the following ways:

- 1) Instructional
 - To benefit the learning of the child and assist teachers
 - Assessment should inform the curriculum and instruction in the classroom

- 2) Communication
 - To communicate about the child and the program with parents
 - To help parents understand educational and quality aspects of the program
 - To communicate with Kindergarten; ensure that schools are ready for children
 - Ideally to get feedback from Kindergarten(s) to preschool program(s)
- 3) Screening for potential special needs?
 - Not to punish, label, or exclude children, but to identify needs
- 4) Accountability
 - to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of programs
 - Would need to be combined with a program evaluation and standards

SRA4- One option is to phase in assessment as a requirement, with participation in the new universal preschool program as an incentive for programs that currently are able to do assessments.

SRA23- The subcommittee highlighted some concerns about using assessment data for program accountability:

- Tying teacher-performed assessments to program accountability can sacrifice the data's reliability.
- If child-based data is used for program accountability, there must be a way to account for different populations being served in different geographic or socioeconomic areas.
- To be used for accountability, data should measure the progress of children over time – ideally at entry to the program and then periodically thereafter, or at some point later in the child's education (e.g. school-based assessments).

PROGRAM QUALITY

November 30, 2004

Co-Chairs

*Senator David Magnani & Linda Martin
Caroline Haines*

Members:

*Kathleen McDermott
Wayne Ysaguirre*

Charge of the Subcommittee

How, when, and by whom is program quality determined?

1. Identify independent evaluation models currently being used in MA programs
2. Consider what other states are using or considering
3. Make recommendations

Subcommittee Recommendations

Program standards are needed to support and promote high quality in all early education and care programs. Additionally, a tool that evaluates the standards is needed. The *No Child Left Behind Act* promotes that fact that all students will proficient in reading and math. It is incumbent upon our Commonwealth to provide for high quality early education and care programs so that our youngest children enter public schools ready to meet the challenge. High quality early education and care programs can have a positive effect upon children, their families, providers, the economy, and ultimately, society at large.

I. Development of Standards and Use of a Tool that Evaluates Quality

Recommendation PQ1 - *Standards for Programs*

Develop a single document that will have consistent goals, philosophy, and guiding principles for all programs (infant/toddler, preschool {center based and public school}, family child care, and school age child care) with separate sections for standards related to each specific program. Existing documents, such as the Head

Start Standards and the Massachusetts Early Childhood Standards will be incorporated into the instrument to ensure that all current best practices and regulations are being incorporated.

Recommendation PQ2 – *Tool for using the Standards to evaluate program quality*

Develop an instrument which will be based on the standards and will be used as the single assessment tool for all programs. It will include a self-evaluation, written documentation, and observable components. Data will be gathered from families, administrators, staff, and validators. Parent and staff interviews, record review, and use of random selection will be employed. In the case of Head Start programs, the PRI SM will continue to be utilized in lieu of the new instrument. If the program is evaluated as deficient, the new instrument will be used for technical assistance as appropriate.

Recommendation PQ3 – *Tools during transition time*

Utilize existing instruments currently being used (NAEYC Accreditation, ECERS, National Association of Family Child Care) until the new instrument is developed and implemented, will continue.

Recommendation PQ4 – *Ongoing development of Standards*

Support the ongoing development of standards for family child care programs being planned for by the Office for Child Care Services, the Department of Education, and experts in the field.

Recommendation PQ5 – *Development of Standards*

Develop standards for infant/toddler and school age programs.

Recommendation PQ6 – *Functions of licensing and technical assistance*

Initiate a “culture of supportive excellence” where oversight and regulatory procedures are delivered in a positive way to improve quality.

Further study is needed to determine the most efficient and beneficial way to implement licensing and technical assistance. Discussions focused on the effectiveness of having the same people who license and monitor programs, provide technical assistance and/or consultation.

Recommendation PQ7- *Professional development requirements for family child care providers* (this may move to the Workforce section)

Enhance licensing standards for family child care providers that include increased hours of training in specific areas, linkage to college degrees, and increase in compensation commensurate with development.

Recommendation PQ8 - *Promoting Quality in all Early Education and Care Programs*

Implement a plan that promotes quality based on high standards. It is recommended that the model designed by Richard Brandon, entitled *Parent and Provider Assistance Package* be adopted.

This plan is comprised of a two layer system that supports the development of high quality early education and care for all children. The first layer provides funding that is disseminated to **all** programs to support quality by providing funds for:

Staffing Standards (qualifications, child:adult ratios, and compensation)

Professional Development (funds for tuition, expenses, and release time)

Accreditation Assistance (support in meeting the Standards)

The second layer provides a funding plan in which rates reflect the actual costs of meeting the high quality standards. Included in that are:

Provider subsidy (full subsidy)

Income-related subsidy (remaining costs of program for children of age or income not covered by Provider Subsidy. Additionally, a sliding scale payment based on income is included)

Parent Fees (co-payments for remainder of costs, minus subsidy or sliding-scale subsidy. Families above the income eligibility limit would pay the full cost of tuition.)

Recommendation PQ9- *Inclusive practices and natural environments*

Deliver all services must be in the child's natural environment. Special education must be delivered in that context. Inclusive programs serving children with and without disabilities have increased in Massachusetts. The subcommittee recommends that this practice continue and be enhanced so that all children receive the services and supports they need within the context of the early education and care program they regularly attend.

Recommendation PQ10 - *Collaboration with other agencies*

Design a Memorandum of Understanding to assure that standards used to assess quality in programs outside of the auspices of the Department of Early Education and Care are compatible with these standards.

Recommendation PQ11 - *continuation of subcommittee*

Allow the current subcommittee will serve as an advisory committee to the new Board of Early Education and Care and be given permission to flesh out details to the aforementioned recommendations.

NOTES

PQ1 - It will be important to have all programs (family child care, center based, public school) and all age groups (infants/toddlers, preschool, school age) utilize a consistent set of standards that vary only for the age group of children or specific program type.

PQ2 - One single instrument should be used for all programs. This would avoid duplication and provide a consistent framework for evaluation and technical assistance.

PQ3 - It will take time for one single instrument to be developed. Until that time, it is recommended that the Department of Early Care and Education identify an existing instrument to use.

PQ4 - The subcommittee lauds the development and implementation of the Early Childhood Program Standards and the use of other instruments. It is recommended that priority be given to other programs and age groups in the development of standards, particularly for family child care programs.

PQ5 - The subcommittee lauds the development and implementation of the Early Childhood Program Standards and the use of other instruments. It is recommended that priority be given to other programs and age groups in the development of standards.

PQ6 – The subcommittee deliberated extensively on the benefits and challenges of having the same people within the Department of Early Education and Care provide services for licensing of programs and provision of technical assistance. We concluded that it would be most advantageous to do so if staff promoted positive relationships and punitive measures were not employed. Rather, a positive relationship could build supportive relationships so that a single staff member could work with a programs to improve quality. Additionally, the Department of Early Education and Care should have a registry of approved consultants to provide specific expertise in particular areas.

PQ7 – Family child care providers present unique challenges to the early education and care workforce. An example of required standards have been developed by an interested group of providers. They follow as an example for consideration.

1. Increase minimum license standard to include the items below.
 - a. High school diploma or GED
 - b. Twenty-two hours of training
 - i. 5 hours in child growth and development
 - ii. 5 hours in curriculum development
 - iii. 5 hours of guidance and discipline
 - iv. 5 hours of parent communication/relationship
 - v. 2 hours of business practice
2. Additional “steps along the ladder” will be developed that include CDA, AA, BA, and MA:
 - a. Program Director:
 - i. AA in early education and care or related field after 3 years
 - ii. BA in early education and care or related field after 7 years
 - b. Family Child Care Coordinator (Home Visitor)
 - i. AA in early education and care or related field after 3 years
 - ii. BA in early education and care after 7 years

PQ8 – This plan identifies two “layers” of support for high quality programs. Layer 1 is for quality enhancement while Layer 2 is for funding sources.

For Level 1, all programs would receive money for quality enhancement regardless of population. Amounts would be determined based on standards for staff, professional development needs of teachers, and accreditation/meeting of

standards needs. Each program would identify staffing standards ratio, compensation), needs and levels of staff regarding professional development. Money would be provided based on the needs of teachers (courses, supports) what professional level they have thus attained (CDA, AA, BA) and what is needed to attain accreditation/meeting the standards (technical assistance, materials).

Operating licenses will be available for all programs. If, at a designated time a program does not attain a specified level of quality, the license will not be renewed. High quality will be promoted through support of staffing standards, professional development, and working toward accreditation/meeting of standards.

An individualized plan would be developed and implemented when programs are initially licensed. The plan would include factors such as:

- o standards for staff (qualifications, child:adult ratios, compensation)
- o identification of staff needs regarding professional development (funds for tuition, expenses, release time)
- o Assistance for meeting standards/accreditation (technical assistance, materials, self-study, validation visit)

For Level 2, **all** programs will be provided with money depending on the financial needs of their population. This would begin with full subsidies and move along to full tuition.

The subcommittee deliberated extensively on the merits of a “star or tiered” system of quality. Eventually, it was determined to recommend a system that supports all programs to achieve quality rather than a ranking system.

PQ9 – Massachusetts has a long and successful history of including children with disabilities in community early care and education programs.

PQ10 – The subcommittee recognizes that programs in departments other than the Department of Early Education and Care will provide some services to young children. It is recommended that specific agreements be developed so that information can be shared and services provided in a seamless fashion.

PQ11 – The subcommittee would like to offer its services beyond the scope of the Advisory Committee and be permitted to continue its efforts.

Attachment PQ1 – DRAFT Alignment of Quality Indicators

Common Areas	PRI SM	NAFCC	DOE Standards	NAEYC Accreditation
Environment	Facilities, Materials, Equipment, and Transportation	Environment	Physical Environment	Physical Environment
Interactions	Family Partnership Building	Relationships	Interactions between staff and children, and among children	Interactions among teachers and children
	Parent Involvement			
	Community Partnerships			
Safety and Health	Facilities, Materials, Equipment, and Transportation	Safety and Health Professional and Business Practices	Health and Safety	Health and Safety
	Prevention and Early Intervention		Nutrition and Food Services	Nutrition and Food Services
Families	Family Partnership Building	Relationships	Family Involvement	Relationships among teachers and families
	Individualization			
Curriculum and Assessment	Curriculum and Assessment	Developmental Learning Goals	Curriculum and Assessment	Curriculum
	Individualization	Activities		
	Disabilities Services			
Transportation	Facilities, Materials, Equipment, and	Safety and Health	Transportation	

	Transportation			
Staff Qualifications and Staff Development			Staff Qualifications and Staff Development	Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
Administration			Administration	Administration
Group Ratio and Size			Group Ratio and Size	
Accreditation and Evaluation			Accreditation and Evaluation	Evaluation
Staffing				Staffing

- - note PRI SM categories:
 - Child Development and Health Services
 - Family and Community Partnerships
 - Program Design

PROGRAM SERVICE DELIVERY

November 30, 2004

Co-Chairs:

Steve Perla

Sylvia Smith

Members

Senator Thomas McGee

Sue Halloran, Mass Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies Network

Helen Charlupski, Mass Association of School Committees

Stacy Dimino, Mass Association of Day Care Agencies

Charge of the Subcommittee:

What does a quality program service delivery system look like for children and families?

5. Identify current programs available statewide and the accessibility and availability to consumers.
6. Identify current parent and human service components for all children in early education and care programs birth through school-age.
7. Make recommendations on a streamlined system providing continuity of care and services for children and families.

Subcommittee Recommendations

One of the key challenges to creating the new Department of Early Education and Care is to streamline, coordinate, and build upon existing programs and services in a way that embraces their strengths and improves upon their weaknesses. The Program Service Delivery Subcommittee approached this challenge by exploring a broad array of programs and services, identifying their key strengths, and creating a vision of a new agency that would incorporate these strengths, and use resources wisely.

I. Scope and Content of Agency

Recommendation SD1

The new department shall include a mixed system of early education and child care programs serving children birth through fourteen years, and through sixteen years for children with special needs.

Recommendation SD2

In addition, the administration of school-age (after school and out of school time) programs shall fall under the new Department of Early Education and Care, and the legislature shall pursue further study on the issues of the extended school day and after-school programming; Continued and increasing interdepartmental and local partnerships between community based providers of services and public and non-public schools is strongly encouraged.

Recommendation SD3

Subsidies and private licensing for Kindergarten programs shall move from the Office of Child Care Services to the Department of Early Education and Care while public Kindergartens continue to be administered through the Department of Education.

Recommendation SD4

The Department of Early Education and Care shall have oversight of integrated preschool classrooms currently operated by public school systems under the Department of Education. The two Departments shall collaborate to ensure all obligations under federal and state laws are met.

Recommendation SD5

The Department of Early Education and Care shall have oversight of the Massachusetts Family Network Program and the Parent Child Home Program, both currently at the Department of Education.

Recommendation SD6

To reduce fragmentation, the Department of Early Education and Care shall explore ways to bring Early Intervention under its authority without jeopardizing Early Intervention's funding sources, and shall report its recommendations to the appropriate committees of the General Court, including but not limited to the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, by July 1, 2005.

Recommendation SD7

The new agency shall include licensing in its functions, and develop and implement uniform licensing standards for all early education and care programs.

II. Streamlining and Coordination of the Early Education and Care System**Recommendation SD8**

The Department of Early Education and Care shall have a role for state, regional and local entities, potentially including but not limited to local and regional offices and local councils on Early Education and Care.

Recommendation SD9

The Department of Early Education and Care shall prioritize funding for services including but not limited to direct services, workforce and professional development, and quality enhancement; The Department shall streamline the purchasing of direct services and address equity concerns across communities.

Recommendation SD10

The Department of Early Education and Care shall review the feasibility of providing special education services to children throughout the mixed early education and care system.

Recommendation SD11

Medical services during school time for children over age three shall be coverable through third party billing of private medical insurers.

Recommendation SD12

To provide for continuity of services, the Fiscal Year 2006 budget for the Department of Early Education and Care shall:

- provide for the continued purchasing of services to children through vouchers, contracts and grants, while the Board of Early Education and Care makes decisions about the future purchasing of direct service;
- minimally maintain current funding levels for any of the existing early childhood and school-age programs and services, in addition to any funding identified for newly created programs

Recommendation SD13

In the system of subsidy eligibility and intake, there shall be:

1. Uniform eligibility requirements
 - a. An annual eligibility determination across the board
 - b. The same sliding fee scale
 - c. The same documentation required, which shall be as minimal as possible under federal funding regulations
2. Multiple methods of subsidy intake, including different means (internet, phone, paper, etc.) and different locations (local and regional)

Recommendation SD14

The eligibility level for all subsidies shall be raised over time to 125% of state median income (SMI), with a sliding fee scale; Those currently in the system shall be grandfathered to stay in it up through that income level and the entry level shall be adjusted to 85% of SMI, then eligibility will increase over four years, by 10% each year to 125% of SMI.

Recommendation SD15

Subsidy reimbursement rates shall be set at a rate that supports high quality education and care and helps ensure parent choice.

Recommendation SD16

Policies of the Department of Early Education and Care shall create defined and articulated interagency agreements to maximize ease of transition between Early Intervention, Preschool, and Kindergarten services for families and children.

Recommendation SD17

The Department of Early Education and Care shall foster collaborations and coordination among programs and services within and outside of the agency serving children within the age range of the agency.

III. Universal Preschool Program

Recommendation SD18

Phasing in of the Universal Preschool Program shall build on the Subcommittee's earlier recommendation around uniform and expanded eligibility for subsidy programs. That recommendation raises eligibility for all subsidy programs to 125% of the State Median Income in the fourth year of implementation. For the purposes of Universal Preschool, eligibility for three and four year olds shall then continue to increase over time in the following increments:

- Year 5: 140% of SMI
- Year 6: 155% of SMI
- Year 7: 170% of SMI
- Year 8: 185% of SMI
- Year 9: 200% of SMI
- Year 10: Universal Eligibility

Recommendation SD19

The Universal Preschool program should use a sliding fee scale consist with the one used for other subsidy programs, but expanded to at least 200% of State Median Income.

Recommendation SD21

The goal of the Universal Preschool program is to prepare all children for school, to provide that all children enter school on an even playing field.

Recommendation SD22

Universal Preschool should be delivered through the existing mixed system of programs and providers.

NOTES

SD1 – Subsidy programs in the Office of Child Care Services currently serve children within this age range, which is determined by the federal guidelines for use of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. Other programs being recommended for inclusion into the new Department serve children within this age range.

SD2- In making this recommendation, Subcommittee members considered many factors related to the school-age children and the programs that serve them. For example:

- The federal funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers is required to be administered by the designated State educational authority (in Massachusetts, the Department of Education).
- There are benefits to keeping public subsidy dollars currently administered by OCCS together in the new Department. Those benefits include:
 - Continuity of services for families as children age out of early childhood programs

- The ability to easily use federal child care dollars currently administered by OCCS;
 - Flexibility and options for parents, providing broader programmatic options with a wider focus
- While locating programs in public schools may be more consumer friendly, frequently those programs are run by community-based organizations.

SD6- There was general agreement among Subcommittee members that Early Intervention is a program that falls within the scope of the new Department of Early Education and Care, because it contributes to the education and development of infants and toddlers and is more effective if coordinated with other early education and care services. Representatives of the Early Intervention program, however, made a strong case that a critical strength of the program in Massachusetts is its ability to use private medical insurance to cover a significant portion of the expense of Early Intervention services. This raised a concern that if the program were to be relocated, private insurers may see a change in the service and no longer cover the expenses. The subcommittee continues to feel strongly that administering Early Intervention within and in coordination with other programs of the Department of Early Education and Care would best meet the needs of children and families. This recommendation reflects the Subcommittee's commitment to achieving that goal without sacrificing the fiscal strength of the program.

SD10- Throughout the Subcommittee's deliberations, members discussed the importance of delivering specialized services to children with special needs in the most appropriate setting for the child – typically in his or her early education and care setting. Currently, these services are frequently delivered to preschool aged children at public school settings. The barriers to bringing services to children in community-based settings include costs, logistics, and workforce limitations.

SD11- This recommendation builds on the current Early Intervention practice of purchasing services through third party medical insurance coverage.

SD12- Subcommittee members had lengthy discussion about the relative strengths of service delivery models that have purchase of direct service at the state, regional, or local level.

Some members of the subcommittee supported the purchasing function at the local level, through a grant-based program, because local entities may know more about what is needed in their communities.

Other Subcommittee members supported a more centralized purchasing function for service delivery, either at the state level or at a combination of state (contracts) and local (voucher) level because:

- The state and/or regional level may be better equipped to handle the volume of service delivery dollars and the number of subsidies than entities at the local level; and
- Centralized purchasing could help address inequities in purchasing and subsidy management that currently exist across local communities

SD14- Currently eligibility for entry to subsidy programs administered by the Office of Child Care Services is set at 50% of the State Median Income (SMI), and families remain eligible up to 85% of SMI. Under the Department of Education's Community Partnerships Program, eligibility is higher, and families may remain in the program up to 125% of SMI.

Subcommittee members agreed that streamlining eligibility across programs was critical to making the Early Education and Care subsidy system more consumer and provider friendly, and that a higher eligibility level would better meet the needs of working families who currently fall through the cracks. It also agreed, however, the very low income families currently or recently participating in Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) programs should continue to receive priority access to subsidies for early education and care.

SD15- While federal funding regulations have historically supported a subsidy reimbursement to providers that is comparable to the 75th to 85th percentile of the current market rate for services, in Massachusetts that reimbursement rate has hovered at approximately the 40th percentile or below. Reimbursement rates that fall below market rate for the services have at least two negative impacts – they do not support the purchase of high quality services, including highly qualified staff, and they discourage programs from participating in state subsidy programs, limiting parent choice.

SD16- Despite efforts to maximize the coordination and integration of services under the new Department of Early Education and Care, these recommendations assume that some level of fragmentation will still exist, at least temporarily. To better serve families, agencies must work together to ensure that families receiving assistance under Early Intervention are able to easily, and without disruption of service, move into special education services in their preschool settings. Agencies must also collaborate to provide all families with information and assistance to facilitate their transition between preschool and Kindergarten programs, whether they be in public, non-public, or community based settings.